



September 16th 2021

European Parliament adopts the Own-Initiative Report of MEP Nagtegaal: “TOWARDS FUTURE-PROOF INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT” – press-release

EBU, ESO and European Inland Waterway Transport Platform warmly congratulate the rapporteur, MEP Caroline Nagtegaal–van Doorn and welcome adoption of the Own-Initiative Report *entitled “Towards future-proof Inland Waterway Transport”* by the European Parliament, at the initiative of Renew Europe.

The report acknowledges the strategic importance of the inland waterway transport sector as an essential pillar in the shift towards multimodal sustainable transport and foresees its key role to achieve the European Green Deal.

The objectives of this report are in line with EBU’s, ESO’s and the European IWT Platform’s position that aims at stimulating inland shipping in Europe, achieving energy transition and higher modal shift from road to inland waterways, and calling for the availability of financial support for the barge owners and operators in their efforts to innovate. Estimation is that the path towards a climate-neutral inland waterway sector will create a funding gap of app. EUR 10 billion, which cannot be financed by the sector alone. It is therefore crucial to set up a dedicated EU inland waterway fund - with support from the Member States and the European Commission - for a sustainable transition, including a one-stop-shop system that is easily accessible for help and assistance and has the possibility to combine projects into a single application, thus increasing the chances for funding.

The IWT sector already today keeps a very positive environmental record, and by increasing its overall modal share in transport, the desired greenhouse gas emissions’ reduction is achievable. Increasing the modal share is also a core priority of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. In this respect, EBU, ESO and European IWT Platform’s also welcome the recognition in the Report of the priority given towards energy transition and availability of alternative fuels for the sector.

The report outlines the elements that need to be addressed and acted upon in order to ensure the relevance and competitiveness of inland shipping on the European level. It has received a vast support across the European Parliament, highlighting the IWT sector’s significance for the European industry, and recognizing urgent the need of the sector to be strengthened and boosted.

Greening, digitalisation and development of autonomous shipping, ports as energy and circular hubs, and last but not least: education and training, together with attractive working conditions – are only a few examples of where the emphasis has been put on.

The Own-Initiative Report is complementing the recently published European Commission’s Communication “*NAIADES III: Boosting future-proof European inland waterway transport*” that is built up by 35 actions and eight flagship initiatives. They will play a critical role in boosting the European inland waterway transport in the near future.

Link to full text adopted: [Texts adopted - Towards future-proof inland waterway transport in Europe - Tuesday, 14 September 2021 \(europa.eu\)](#)

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EBU

The European Barge Union (EBU) represents the inland navigation industry in Europe. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators of nine European inland navigation countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Romania and Switzerland). It also represents the interests of a number of international organisations dealing with IWT and Short Sea Shipping.

Website: www.ebu-uenf.org

ESO

The European Skippers Organisation is the voice of the independent Inland Waterway Transport entrepreneurs. ESO looks after the interests of the barge owners at European level with representatives from six European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, the UK and Poland)

Website: www.eso-oeb.org

European IWT Platform

As an executive body of EBU and ESO, the European IWT Platform aims at a stronger positioning of inland navigation in European and national transport policies by an intensified contribution to various governing bodies, working parties and standard setting committees like CESNI and ADN. The European IWT Platform cooperates with the European Institutions, the River Commissions, the UN ECE, as well as with national administrations and relevant stakeholders.

Website: <https://www.inlandwaterwaytransport.eu/>